

Before The
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

Section 68.4(a) of the Commission's Rules
Hearing Aid-Compatible Telephones

RM-8658

To: Wireless Telecommunications Bureaus

cc: E. Wendy Austries
Policy Division
Room 3-B101

REPLY COMMENTS OF DIANA D. BENDER

I have read the comments previously made in response to the request to reopen the Petition for Rule Making regarding Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones and am respectfully submitting reply comments in response. I am a profoundly deaf professional, who has worked for over 20 years for a large chemical manufacturer. I am able to perform my duties only with the help of assistive technology and being able to use the telephone is a necessary requirement for me to perform my job responsibilities. Fortunately hearing aid compatible telephones have been mandated by law since 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act enables me to obtain assistive devices which are necessary for me in order to be able to use them. As part of my job, I travel frequently and access to digital wireless communication would be very useful to me because I could purchase equipment uniquely suited to my disability, just as I have done for my home wired telephone.

In their comments, Verizon Wireless states that hearing aid compatibility is not yet technologically feasible and therefore the exemption for cordless telephones should remain in place. Mr. Gene Bechtel, however, in his comments stated that he has used a digital cordless telephone manufactured by Ericsson, although he found that the volume was insufficient. With the current exemption for digital cordless telephones from the requirements of hearing aid compatibility, there is no incentive for manufacturers to improve current technology or develop the new technology needed so that those of us with hearing loss will be able to use this very important communication tool. I strongly urge you to remove the exemption currently in place and require that digital wireless telephones, like all other telephones, be covered by the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988.

Respectfully submitted,

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